REMARKS

In a non-final Office Action mailed April 4, 2007, the Examiner rejected claims 10-20, 27, and 35 under 35 U.S.C. § 101. The Examiner also rejected claims 1-35 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) over Midwinter (U.S. Patent No. 6,668,288). Applicants herein cancel claims 11, 21, 22, and 29 and amend claims 1-5, 10, 12-20, 23, 26-28, 30, 32, and 35 to more clearly identify the subject matter for which applicants seek protection. As a result, claims 1-10, 12-20, 23-28, and 30-35 are now pending. For reasons discussed in detail below, applicants submit that the pending claims are now in condition for allowance.

A.   Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 101

The Examiner rejected claims 10-20, 27, and 35 under 35 U.S.C. § 101 as directed to intangible embodiments of a computer readable media [e.g., transmission media or other suitable media in which logic may be encoded for carrying instructions]. (Office Action, p. 2). Although applicants disagree, applicants have amended these claims to recite "a computer readable storage medium." Because these claims recite a "storage" medium, the claims are not directed to an intangible medium. Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw the rejection of these claims under 35 U.S.C. § 101.

B.   Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e)

The Examiner rejected claims 1-35 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) over Midwinter. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

Midwinter describes a technique for establishing a data conference between participants connected through an external network, participants connected through a PSTN, and participants connected through an intranet. (Col. 4, lines 26-37). To prevent unauthorized persons from obtaining data used in a data conference, Midwinter describes a secure zone (containing a master data server) and a partly secure zone (containing slave

data servers). (*See e.g.,* Abstract). These zones are connected by a secure firewall that restricts incoming messages to the secure zone to only those messages which originate directly in the partly secure zone. (*Id.*). When a conference is created on the master data server, the master data server sends the details of the conference (conference identifier and password) to the slave data servers. (Figure 3; Col. 5, lines 22-24, 28-49). Participants join the conference by sending a request (including the correct conference identifier and password) to a slave data server. (Figure 3; Col. 5, lines 50-54). To exchange data during the conference, a participant sends the data to the slave data server to which it is connected; the slave data server forwards the data to the master data server. (Col. 6, lines 1-45). The master data server then forwards the data to the other slave data servers, which forward the data to any participants to which they are connected. (*Id.*)

Midwinter, however, neither teaches nor suggests "a lobby...to which potential participating computing systems in the external network that are awaiting authorization to join the data conference may be admitted" as recited by the claims. Midwinter describes nothing similar to applicants' lobby.

In contrast to the claimed approach, Midwinter's technique authorizes participants to join a conference simply based upon a request that includes the correct conference identifier and password. (*See e.g.,* Figure 3; Col. 5, lines 50-54). For example, if a not yet authorized participant sends a request to join a conference to a slave data server, the participant will be joined to the conference when the request includes the correct conference identifier and password. Unlike Midwinter's technique, applicants' technology will not join a participant to a data conference merely upon the receipt of a correct conference identifier and password. Instead, applicants' technology establishes a lobby to which potential participants awaiting authorization to join a data conference may be admitted.

Because Midwinter does not describe anything similar to applicants' lobby, it also fails to teach or suggest the act of "admitting the at least one of the potential participating

computing systems to the lobby" as recited by claims 1 and 10. The Examiner relies on Figure 3, #114 of Midwinter to provide this act. (Office Action, p. 5; emphasis added). As illustrated in step 114 of Figure 3, Midwinter neither teaches nor suggests admitting at least one potential participating computing system to the lobby. Rather, Figure 3, #114 expressly provides that "participants join [the] conference." (emphasis added).

Midwinter also fails to teach or suggest "receiving a notification [or an indication] that...[a] potential participating computing system in the external network has been admitted to a lobby" as recited by claims 28 and 23. The Examiner relies on column 4, lines 26-65 of Midwinter to provide these acts (Office Action, p. 5). This section of Midwinter describes how an organizer sends a request to the reservation system to establish a data conference and says nothing about notifying or indicating when a potential participant has been admitted to a lobby.
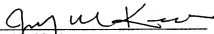
C.   Conclusion

For at least the reasons discussed above, it is clear that Midwinter neither teaches nor suggests all the elements of independent claims 1, 10, 23, and 28. Accordingly, applicants respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw the rejection of these claims under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) over Midwinter. In addition, because claims 2-9, 12-20, 24-27, and 30-35 depend from these claims, they are allowable for at least the same reasons.

Based upon these remarks and amendments, applicants respectfully request reconsideration of this application and its early allowance. If the Examiner has any questions or believes a telephone conference would expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is encouraged to call the undersigned at (206) 359-8077.

Applicants believe no fee is due with this response. However, if a fee is due, please charge our Deposit Account No. 50-0665, under Order No. 418268880US from which the undersigned is authorized to draw.

Dated: 07 / 05 /07

Respectfully submitted,

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